1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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574 The Yandrana people claim that if the nobles came for a feast to their village, the Yandrana folk, as "teeth" (*mbati*) took no part in carrying the share of the feast of the land to Tumbou; it formerly was forbidden to call upon them to do so, for this was the duty of Wathiwathi and Waitambu, but now they may not refuse because of the law of disobedience instituted by the British government.

574 462 252 Feasts, like all food cooked in hot stones, are prepared by the men. Guests are often honored by a breakfast of boiled food prepared, like all boiled food, by the women. The women come in single file to the guest's house, each bearing on her arm a tray of plaited coconut leaf called *i lalakai* and perhaps a gipsy pot containing fish boiled in coconut cream. The women enter the house and lay the food before the guests. This custom is called *takitaki* (carrying trays).

FESTIVALS OR POTLATCHES

Lauan Style

431 574 The word festival is a convenient translation of the word *solevu*, but it does not express its essence, which is a ceremonial exchange of presents between two groups with the accompaniment of feasts, often dances, and sometimes cricket. Perhaps the American word potlatch best renders its essential character of a competition between two teams. The word apparently is composed of *so*, to score in a game, and *levu*, big; it is therefore a "great competition," and in fact a competitive spirit dominates these festivals. The side that gives most is said to be victorious (*nggangga*); the other is beaten (*ndruka*).

The following account has been obtained:

> The visitors present their stuff, first piling it up in the open. Then one of their nobles, holding up a whale's tooth, or teeth, speaks: "*Ia*, little tooth."
>
> The other party, the hosts, then exclaim, "*Woi! woi!*"
>
> He begins again: "A little tooth."
>
> The others cry out "*A woi! woi!* great whale's tooth, *oi!*" (Some people go wrong here and shout this after the first time.) If the potlatch is on the occasion of disregarding mourning (*vakataraisulu*) the visitor proceeds, "The towel (*ka ni solo*) to make things right for so and so at his death. We who are forbidden [ordinary] clothes, we come and take off our clothes to you that we may love one another. My speech is long, etc." A nobleman from the other side stands up and takes the whale's teeth, and cries out, "*kamunganga*."
>
> The hosts answer "*oi, oi, oi.*"
>
> The visitor continues (*kamunganga*), and makes a short speech. He then hands the teeth over to his heralds, who receives them sitting, kisses them, and prays over them (*masulaki*). The people who are going out of mourning have wrapped themselves round with good new bark cloth; which they now remove and lay down before their hosts. This is a common custom at potlatches and is described as "taking off one's clothes to So-and-so." It would be disrespectful for a herald to present the

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desirable, for sluggish water becomes hot and wilts the plants. The irrigation consists in dipping water from the stream with coconut shells attached to a stick, or flooding the fields by turning the course of the stream.

Formerly there were two kinds of taro fields: those cultivated by the *mbiti* method and those by the *lauvoro*. The *mbiti* method is now discontinued because it involves too much time and labor. It was described to me as follows:

> In a *mbiti* the grass is cut, fired, and the rubbish removed so that the soil appears; the body of the soil (*yango ni nggele*) is dug thoroughly; then conical holes are made with a special digging stick, which has a head like that of a javelin reed or an European gun shell; some of the heads were as thick as the post of a house. The pits thus made were as deep as four feet. The patches were encased in earth walls surrounded by ditches. Taro raised by this method grew as high as six feet, with tubers eighteen inches long.

By the *lauvoro* method the grass is cut and the taro planted in the midst of the rubbish; the holes being made with a pole (*i pasa*) (Pl. II, *A*) which broadens at its lower end, narrowing to a point; the blade is flat on one side and slightly convex on the other, making small conical holes.

Both cuttings and suckers are planted. In planting cuttings, the top of the root is removed with the stem, the leaves removed also. There is no special season for planting taro, although certain times seem to be more productive than others. For instance, taro maturing in November and December, when it is most needed because of yam stortage during these months, has an unpleasant flavor and develops an abundance of suckers. Occasional weeding is necessary until maturity, when it becomes harmful. In the days of the late Tui Naiau, huge taro fields still extended from the back of Tumbou to the foot of Kendekende; now only the upper part is properly cultivated, the work being done mostly in the evening.

Sugar Cane Growing

Sugar cane is planted in clumps here and there, in the villages or in the fields, merely for use in puddings. A charm is used to drive away the *kitu*, a small bird which eats the sugar-cane and plantains. The owner of the charm rubs certain leaves in his hands and points to a distant spot. The birds then fly to the place indicated.

Sugar cane, *nggai* (*Dracaena terminalis*), supplies a thick juicy root which is cooked in hot stones for three days, producing a substance which tastes like licorice. Such ovens are not often made as they are large and require that the stones be heated all night.

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Naivi or Vatuwangga catch any it has to be cooked at Big House and from there it is distributed among the nobles.

225

Turtles are caught on land in the breeding season when they come to lay eggs in the sand at night. The experts go over to a small island, such as Vanua Masi, and watch at night. They tell the time when a turtle will come ashore, not, as in the Solomon Islands by the condition of the previous batch of eggs, but by the moon, which must be full. A Moala man says that whenever he watches for turtle a spirit (*timoni*) appears if there is any turtle; he sees a light; if he is not afraid there is no turtle, but if fear seizes him there is. A Tongan says that in Vanua Masi there are two cairns [587] like truncated cones with the tops beautifully level. These cairns are solid, six feet high by eighteen inches broad. From these cairns comes a sound like a whistle, once if there is one turtle, twice if two. There is also a spring there called *rauraw mawi* because water may only be drawn with the left arm.

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Turtle is also fished with big nets made of coir rope; the meshes are very large. The net is taken out in a canoe at night and extended in the water wherever they expect to find turtle. The turtle is then driven into the net. The chief fisherman is called *ndau*. These parties go out at the bidding of Roko Sau when some great festival or undertaking is forward. Turtle fishing is a very expensive thing for the chief, because every stage involves gifts. First when the canoe with its freight of turtle comes along the fishermen on board sing as they punt and blow the conch. The people in the village know, and inform the chief; they make preparations; the gifts are set apart with whale's teeth and kava; the feast is made ready, the expecting feast (*kena i waraki*). The conveyers of the turtle are coming; the song of victory runs: [539]

Au sa mate e na liliwa;	I am perished with cold;
Tu me kei thei a tinatina?	For whom is the sow?

The meaning is they are cold and expect to have pig as a relish. A variant is: [539]

Au sa mate e na ndolo;	I am dead with swimming;
Tu me kei thei a vakalolo?	For whom is the pudding?

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Thus the fishermen sing what they desire that it may not be refused; they shout (*thimbi*) and stamp on the canoe. They land and tie a rope to each flipper to drag the turtle on its back to Big House. As they drag they shout: *"Vonu e tapate."* The turtle is then offered up in the usual style. That rope by which it was tied involves a gift for unloosening the rope (*i sere ni ndali*); it is presented on behalf of Roko Sau together with other whale's teeth "for piercing the eye" (*i thula ni mata*, a term which cannot be explained) and with kava as an "earnest" (*i sevuseva*). The fishermen then proceed to drink kava: when the feast is cooked and brought, the things they sang about form part of the feast; besides which the men go and eat food in the plantations without leave, and they root up kava; for turtle fishing is somewhat of a noble custom (*ka vakaturanga no*); it is an occasion for some measure of disorder.

Turtles are kept in small circle enclosures (*mbi*) made of stout sticks stuck in the sand below high water mark, until there is enough for a feast; it may be three months. The making of this enclosure involves gifts called *i viri ni mbi*. The enclosure is first made large enough for two or three turtles; if more are caught it means more gifts for the fisherman. There is one presentation called the breaking of the enclosure (*i mbasu ni mbi*). Many things the fishermen do to increase the gifts.

[252] The green fat of the turtles is wrapped in leaves and baked; it is a choice bit.

Yawa Fishing in Mavana

226 In Mavana is a pond in which there is a fish called *yawa*, flat and as much as a cubit long. One name of the pond is "the *Dracaena* oven" (*lovo ninggai*).

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FOOD AND ITS PREPARATION

Introduction

The basis of diet is yams and taro, to a certain extent breadfruit. These are commonly spoken of as "food," or more precisely "true food" or food "proper"; tasty food eaten with it, whether meat, fish, or pudding, is called *i lava*. To procure a relish for food is one of the chief interests. One advantage of being a wealthy noble is to have a relish daily. Pig is the most highly favored relish.

Formerly the nobles took pigs to some of the Southern Islands to be fed and put a tapu on them (*tambu puaka*). When the pigs were large, the nobles went to the islands to free the pigs from the tapu; or the animals were brought to Lakemba for this purpose, then slaughtered and a feast was made in which the people of the island shared. The few cattle kept are not used for milk.

Stewing

The most common form of cooking is boiling. Yams and taro are plain boiled. On Sundays fish is used for soup (*su*) and is then cooked with coconut cream and greens; the greens are often mixed with *kota*, which is made with grated coconuts and shredded prawns soaked in sea water and allowed to ferment from a day to a week; the vile smell is mitigated by cooking. Prawns and coconut make delicious soup, especially with cress added. Sweet potato leaves are sometimes boiled with coconut cream; young taro leaves so treated form a favorite dish called *pakia*.

Coconut cream is the basis of all tasty cooking; it is used with everything except yams and meat. It is made by grating the flesh on a toothed piece of iron turned up at the end and nailed on a board on which the man sits to grate; the gratings are put into a bowl and strained, like kava, with fibers of *vau*. With coconut cream a sauce called *miti*, for use with fish and yams, is made by pouring lemon juice and sea water on grated coconut and then squeezing the coconut; onions and chillies may be added.

While the husband is away at work all day the wife will sometimes catch prawns or collect shell-fish to make a special evening meal called the awaiting feast (*i wawa*).

Baking

The Fijian oven is of a type universal in the Pacific. It consists of a hole three feet or more in diameter, into which is placed small fuel, then big fuel, topped with stones. While the stones are getting hot, the taro,

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252 breadfruit, or whatever is required for puddings, is roasted, and banana leaves are heated to make them supple. When the stones are hot they are spread out with sticks and covered with leaves, on which the food is placed. If both taro and yam are put in together the contents of the oven are said to be like a sea-snake, in other words brindled. Taro is put in pealed, yams unpealed. Fish is usually wrapped in breadfruit leaves lain inside a fan palm leaf, an envelope of fish (*i sala ni ika*) it is called; but sometimes it is placed with sauce, inside a banana leaf like a pudding. A pig is singed whole, scraped, the legs are cut off, and the entrails removed by making a slit in the abdomen and one in the throat; then the belly is filled with hot stones and it is put into the oven whole; the legs are put in separately; the liver and the edible viscera are put in a leaf with water and put into the oven or else they are boiled and eaten by the workers. Oxen are no longer cooked whole, as it was found better to cut them up raw and let each man take his share home and boil it.

When the oven is full it is covered with old baskets and sacks, then buried. While the food is cooking, baskets are plaited of coconut leaves. The steam coming through the top of the oven indicates that the food is cooked.

354 Sometimes ovens are made in the evening and dug up in the morning; this is called *melo*.

Puddings

252 Puddings (*nggalu*) appear at most feasts, but are seldom made except for feasts, as they involve much labor.

Most puddings are made with taro, none with yams. For some puddings the taro is roasted to keep its flavor. The taro may be pounded or grated; grated puddings are more esteemed. For pounding, the taro is placed in a long trough. A man stands on either side armed with the stump of a coconut leaf and pounds it into a sticky mass (*matu*); then an expert wets his hands, seizes some of the mash in each hand and squeezes it so that it oozes out between the thumb and forefinger, then shakes it off in pellets about an inch thick. One who has the knack can throw pellets on alternate hands with great speed. The pellets are rolled in the sauce, then put into banana leaves which are gathered up round them and tied at the top with a piece from the midrib. The sauce is always made with coconut cream, raw or cooked; puddings with cooked sauce are more esteemed. Formerly if the sauce were raw the banana leaf was simply tied round the top of the leaf; if the sauce were cooked, one end of the leaf was turned down like a hood, then tied round; now all puddings are tied alike.

For white *sivaro*, pellets are prepared as above; for sauce raw coconut cream with sea water and sugar is used. This is a quick method. Sometimes the sauce is mixed with *Dracaena* juice.

Another pudding of which I do not know the name, was made in this way:

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Sugar-cane was grated and squeezed onto grated coconut; the grated coconut was then squeezed and the juice was boiled for a long time and stirred the while. In the meantime manioc and bananas were cooked in breadfruit leaves, then pounded; the sauce was sprinkled on the mash with a brush consisting of the folioles of a coconut leaf cut short and tied together. Then the men made the mash into pellets after dipping their hands in the sauce.

Dry *sivaro* is so called because there is little sauce and that thick.

Grate coconut fine, shred, put into the pot; add sugar-cane and boil; add water and grated coconut with sugar until it is dry; mix pellets of taro mash with the sauce.

A dish, *waisu*, possibly a Tongan concoction, is made with large plantains slit and stuffed with grated coconut.

Pekepeke, or "dipping," classed among puddings, is simply sweet yam dipped in coconut cream with each bite; it is the pudding of the lowborn, a pudding of the bush. The term is also used of a proper pudding in depreciation when offering it to a gentleman.

Tongans do not make many puddings, only *waisu*, *hoho*, and *ngoua*, this last a kind of mollusc called *veata*, in Fiji.

There is a story that a Tongan came to Fiji and tasted some puddings in Mbau. The taste pleased him and he said, "I shall go and make this pudding in my village that I may eat of it with my people." When he came to Tonga he told his people to grate coconut and boil taro. So the Tongans boiled it as he instructed.

When it was cooked the Tongans said, "How is it to be made?" Then he said, "I stayed in the house and it was brought in."

So they could not proceed. Hence when a man undertakes to do a thing and after starting finds he does not know how, they use this proverb, "I stayed in the house, and it was brought in."

Fermenting

Fermented fo[illegible] excepting Tahitian chestnuts, have disappeared from Lau, as it is no longer necessary to lay in stocks of food.

Bananas and taro in olden times were heaped up in pits lined with leaves and covered over. There food was fermented, giving out a smell unendurable to Europeans. The stuff was taken out when required, cooked, and eaten. The taste is slightly sour. Such food was called *mandrai* from *mandra*, decayed; the word is now used also of European bread.

Fermented Tahitian chestnut was called *sikiviro*. In Kandavu the grated nut is allowed to ferment for two or three days in a wooden trough; it is then pressed into balls, wrapped in breadfruit leaves, and boiled.

Yams are never fermented.

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The procedure is simple on less formal occasions, such as marriage or death feasts for individuals in the village. The kava is prepared either by young men or by girls. Sometimes the kava maker and the cup bearer are girls and the kava chewers are men. In olden days kava was prepared and drunk by men only. Today it is occasionally drunk by women in southern Lau. The assistants at the bowl are frequently absent. Occasionally the bowl has several legs or no legs at all. It is not raised for inspection by the herald before water is added, the hands are not examined, and the mixture is tested, after being strained, by being poured into the bowl from a raised cup. The tabus pertaining to the straining process are not observed, and the drinking order is not fixed, nor is it called by the herald. The men in the kava circle usually smoke between rounds. To light his cigarette, which is leaf tobacco rolled in a dried banana leaf (*suluka*), each has placed before him a burning brand.

Occasionally a few individuals hold a kava party in the very early morning called *pongipongi*. Lauans say this is a Tongan custom.

FEASTS

Every important ceremony is marked by a feast, which is presented by one group to another, divided into shares, and distributed according to rank to both recipients and donors. Feasts vary in size and quality of food according to the rank of the recipients and the resources of the donors. Food for most feasts differs from that of the daily meal only in the larger quantity for each individual and in the addition of a sweet pudding for each. Communal fishing which provides fish for the feast usually yields more and larger fish than are caught daily by the women. Turtle and pig are great delicacies served only at important feasts for high ranking persons. Turtle is considered the most chiefly food.

In Lau important feasts are steamed in the earth oven (pl. 2, *A*) by men, while small feasts, eaten in the morning, are boiled by women. In contrast to the daily use of the earth oven in Lau (p. 153) it is used only for feasts in the interior of Viti Lèvu.

The cooked food for a large feast is placed on the village ceremonial ground or outside the house of the recipient and is presented according to the usual ceremony (pp. 65-66) by one of the donors. A small feast is divided outside the house of the donor. Coconut leaves are spread on the ground and the food from the oven is piled upon them. Freshly plaited coconut-leaf baskets, one for each household, are arranged in a circle around the food. The food is shared according to households and distributed by the host. At a large feast the food is distributed according to clans under the direction of the chief of crops or the chief of the ceremonial ground. True food (*kana utchina*), namely garden produce, is distributed first, then puddings, fish, turtle,

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or pig. Pots of boiled food, covered with slightly dry breadfruit leaves, fastened down by tying a piece of pandanus around the rim, are brought by the women from the kitchens into the circle. The boiled food is either wrapped in leaves and put into baskets with the steamed food by the men, or is left in pots to be distributed with the baskets. The rank and size of the household and its relationship to the host determine the quantity and quality of its share.

The food in the baskets is covered with leaves (hibiscus, banana, breadfruit, ti). The shares are then delivered to each household by young men related to the host. The food is distributed to the members of the household and eaten quickly and informally. Sweet puddings are eaten first, then the main part of the feast. Guests from other villages often carry their food home and eat it in their own village. Shares for visiting guests with canoes are delivered to the canoes. Frequently the shares for close relatives in nearby villages are set aside and delivered.

The chief or person of highest rank always receives the first and best share of a feast. Cooked food presented to the chief or other high persons is covered with green leaves as a sign of respect. Large fish and turtles are wrapped in breadfruit, banana, or ti leaves and steamed in the oven. The head is preferred because it contains the mana and is therefore served to the person of highest rank. Formerly the head of the turtle or pig was eaten by the chief only. Now, in accordance with the Tongan custom (Gifford, 9, p. 125), the back is eaten instead and the priest receives the head.

Ceremonial Exchanges

Large competitive ceremonial exchanges (*solevu*) are made according to a definite ceremonial pattern based on the *sevusevu* rites which were formerly used to make offerings to the ancestor gods but are now used to present first fruits to the chief (pp. 65-66).

On Kambara a *solevu* with deferred payment is occasionally held between the rival villages, Tokalau and Nggalinggali, and between Undu and Lomatchi. Each village tries to outdo the other in quantity of food presented. Several months or years may elapse between the initial payment and the return payment.

The following description of a competitive exchange with immediate payment, held in January 1934, between Komo and Muanaithake was obtained on Fulanga.

The exchange was initiated by the Komo people who sent a message to Muanaithake by a visiting Muanaithake man, asking that a *solevu* be held. The Komo people stated that they wished wooden bowls, a small canoe, paddles, chickens, mats, and pandanus, and that they would bring manioc. A village meeting was held in Muanaithake and the proposal was accepted. Work began on the articles, and four months later a group of Muanaithake men went to Komo on the Fulanga cutter. The Komo people gave a feast called *mangitchi ni veikandavi*. The Muanaithake helped the Komo people cut manioc in

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726 the warriors during this time. If any man broke the tabu he was obliged to
[834] confess, otherwise the raid would be unsuccessful.

[411] The most important weapons were the club (*i malungu*), the spear (*moto*), the bow (*ndakai tchitchi*), and the sling (*i rambo*).

712 Fortified villages were built for defense on high points along the ridges of limestone islands or at the summit of volcanic hills. On the limestone islands such villages were protected by a series of walls made of unworked stone which reinforced the natural fortifications and guarded all approaches to the fort. On volcanic islands they were protected by a series of ramparts of earth surmounted in times of war by fences of reeds. Some were surrounded by a moat. Ruins of defense walls, house platforms, and earth works may still be seen.

726 When nearing a village, the attacking party often sang a war chant. Occasionally the raiders set fire to the village. On returning from a raid, whether successful or not, the warriors took kava to the god house and pre-
727 sented it ceremonially to the priest. When victorious warriors returned to their own village with slain or captured enemies, they called out the titles of their weapons. All the men went to the chief's house and sang the song of victory (*thimbi*), ending with a yell. Meanwhile the war gong was beaten outside. If the leader or "strong man" of the enemy had been killed his head
[578] and penis were tied to a stick in front of the village or sent back to the defeated village as a gross insult.

727 Then followed the feast of life (*i mburua ni mbula*), at which the bodies (*mbakola*) of enemies were eaten. If the leader of the enemy had been
266 captured he was eaten. Other men and women were chosen because they were soft, young, and fat. This war feast was the concrete expression of victory. The bodies were eaten for revenge, to show the superiority of the conquerors over the vanquished and to secure mana from the enemy. The bodies were
● [252] steamed whole in a large earth oven (*lovo ni mbakola*), and pigs and vegetable foods were also steamed for the feast. When all was ready the bodies were cut up and all the food was placed in baskets and set down outside the god house by the youngest men of the clan under the direction of the chief of crops. The priest in the god house was informed that the feast was ready. He presented it to the war god before the food was distributed. Special parts were served to the chief. Informants did not know, however, which parts these were. Each household took a share home, and the human flesh was consumed by the whole village—men, women, and children.

After an unsuccessful raid a death feast (*i mburua ni mate*) was held.

431 A village might appease the anger of a chief or of another village over
728 some transgression, such as the stealing of a woman, by the ceremonial

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Concerning food gathering in the past, Moto, an old man of the Matasoata clan in Undu, gave the following information: 222

When I was a boy we always gathered our food. Men, women, and children gathered fruits and nuts, and the women and children gathered leaves. Our everyday food was the *wangiri* nut. It grows on a vine in the bush. The black, shelled nuts were roasted and eaten right in the bush. If we had some nuts left after satisfying our appetites, we took them home in a basket of coconut leaves and sank the basket into salt water to make fermented food (*mandrai*), as we do now with manioc or breadfruit. [415] [252]

When I was a boy about the size of Nggauna [who was fifteen] we had no real garden land on Kambara. Where the gardens are on Ndelaioloi near Tokalau, trees were growing, mainly the Tahitian chestnut and the *ndawa*. We had no manioc except *manioka ni India*, which was poisonous, and the poison had to be extracted before it could be eaten. We had the white and red sweet potato; the brownish ones came later. When I was a boy we did not have as many sweet potatoes as we have today. We planted very small patches only, usually among the trees where the bush did not grow too thickly. Gradually the fruit trees on Ndelaioloi died away and the land was used for gardens. We had no real yams, only the sweet yam (*kawai*) and the *kaile* and a very few wild yam (*tchivoli*). We planted wild yam and *kaile* only in the bush where we found them growing wild. We did not need to search for wild yam because we knew where they grew and also knew to whom they belonged. Sometimes we planted from three to four sweet yam plants together. We dug no real holes and never made mounds as we do today.

Fishing

The waters surrounding the islands of Lau are rich in fish. On clear days, as one passes by canoe over the colorful lagoons, large schools can be seen moving over the white bottom and slowly drawing around the coral limestone formations, which stretch under the water like colored hills and valleys. 226 [136]

Fishing techniques differ on the various islands, due to the character of the coast, the lagoon, and the reef; to the depth and clearness of water; to the currents; and to the kind of fish prevalent in the vicinity.

Women catch most of the daily supply of fish in nets. Only when fishing becomes a sport, as in spearing, or when it is connected with a ceremony, as in communal fishing, do men participate. The master fisherman has charge of communal fishing and the fishing grounds (p. 51). There is less organized fishing today than there was in the past. Usually fishing is done by small groups, who disturb the fish so that actually fewer and smaller ones are now caught. The master fisherman of Kambara says that if the people do not ask permission before they go fishing they do not make a good catch.

Fishing with nets

Tatanga. The *tatanga* is a rectangular net not quite one fathom wide and about one fathom long. It is spread out by two sticks, 3 to 4 cm. in diameter, one attached to each short side of the net. Three to six women blacken their faces with ashes, especially the region around the eyes, as a protection from sun. Each woman takes a *tatanga* net, rolls it around two sticks, and carries it on her shoulder or in her hand. On Kambara the women use diving goggles, called *suvimarini* (submarine), which are said to have been introduced about ten years ago. The nets are unfolded on the beach. Women prefer [302] [751]

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to plant it was a waste of time and soil. Most people today plant the shoots without testing them by this method.

Bananas are harvested by men only. Usually the bunches are picked and hung from beams in the house to ripen. If wrapped in tapa to exclude light they turn yellow quickly. Sometimes a bunch is tied to a stick resting across the mouth of a hole in the ground so that the bunch hangs in the hole; then the hole is covered. The bananas ripen quickly without the skins turning yellow.

Nothing is done to fight the several banana pests. Young banana shoots are killed by a black beetle (*Cosmopolites sordidus*) which eats its way into the heart. Bats, especially the flying fox, eat bananas and many birds attack them.

Papaya

Papaya (*lewetchi, Carica papaya*) trees are found on all the islands of Lau. Wherever there is a chance clearing in the bush there are papaya trees, seeded by birds; but the fruit is small through lack of sun or exposure to wind. Papaya seeds are strewn carelessly. As the sprouts come to the surface a few stones are placed around them for protection. Within three months a tree is 2 to 3 meters high. The fruit is best during the first and second year. The main crop is ripe about November, December, and January, but papayas are eaten throughout the year. The fruit which weighs up to six pounds is picked off the tree with a stick. Papaya is not valued highly by the natives.

NON-FOOD PLANTS

Pandanus

Pandanus grows well on Kambara, and especially well on Wangava. On Fulanga it is good and plentiful. The leaves have a special softness, do not break when dry, and make fine smooth mats. Namuka has little pandanus.

Pandanus grows best in the shade and in damp soil. Usually it is found as an underbrush in coconut groves. Occasionally one sees a patch in the bush. It is planted by men or women, preferably during the rainy season. A crown shoot about 0.5 meter long is cut out of a plant and part of it is shoved into a hole dug in the ground. The first leaves are cut after one year of growth, but they are too weak and small to make good mats. The leaves are best in the third and fourth years of growth. They are cut in the dry months, about 5 or 6 cm. from the trunk. A plant that has grown so high that the leaves cannot be cut while the cutter is standing on the ground is bent.

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PREPARATION OF FOOD

In Lau there is one main meal a day which is eaten just after sundown. Left over food is eaten cold the next morning. In general, however, the Lauan eats throughout the day whatever he can find in the bush. Sometimes a morning meal is prepared and eaten between nine and eleven o'clock. Occasionally when the men are working in the village women boil a pot of manioc for them. When they are in the garden, however, the men often prepare garden produce in an earth oven for a morning meal. A man for whom communal work is done provides a small morning feast for the workers.

Most of the activities of each day are directed toward procuring enough food for the evening meal. During the greater part of the year on most islands the evening meal consists of steamed manioc, sweet potato, or breadfruit, and greens boiled in coconut cream with or without fish. If there is no fish or meat the meal is considered poor.

From one to three closely related households within the same clan or subclan form a food group. They share a kitchen hut (kitchen huts have been introduced by the colonial government) and an earth oven, and prepare and eat their food together. Cooking arrangements may be shared by a household consisting of a man, his wife, and their children and another household of a married son, his wife, and their children. Or they may be shared by a household consisting of a man, his wife, and their children and another household consisting of the man's widowed sister and her children. (See table 1 and figure 3, K14, 15 and K19, 20.) Occasionally a single household has its own kitchen hut and earth oven (table 1; figure 3, K16, K21). Boiling was formerly done in the dwelling house on the hearth.

There is a strict sex division of labor in regard to the preparation of food in Lau, and there is a general division in the type of food prepared by each sex. Usually the men cook the food they have raised, such as garden produce, while the women cook the greens and fish they have procured. The men do the major part of the cooking including all the steaming, roasting, boiling with hot stones, preparing sweet puddings, and fermenting in salt water. The women do all the boiling in pots and fermenting by burial in the ground.

Fuel for the kitchen is gathered in the bush by the adolescent girls of each food group. The bundle of wood is strapped to the back by means of native rope. The rope is looped over the shoulder and under each arm and crossed over the bundle behind.

The cooking places of men and women are separate. The women do all their cooking in kitchen huts, usually located near the sleeping houses with which they are associated. The men use the earth ovens located on the edge of the village. The location and communal use of kitchens and earth ovens in Tokalau is shown in figure 3 (table 1). Women or uncircumcized boys are

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not allowed to participate in the preparation of food for the earth oven. However, in households today, where there is a shortage of adult males, uncircumcized boys and occasionally even women help.

Usually the oldest active woman in each kitchen group directs the procuring and preparation of food to be boiled. When the group includes the mothers of both husband and wife, the husband's mother takes precedence. (As shown in table 1 and figure 3, K22, 23, 24 is supervised by 118.) When the group includes the wife and the husband's sister, the wife takes precedence if she is about the same age as the husband's sister, whereas the husband's sister takes precedence if she is older than the wife. (As shown in figure 3 and table 1, K19, 20 is supervised by 91, whereas K8, 9, 11 is supervised by 35.) The activities centering around the earth oven are directed by the oldest active man in each earth-oven group. I found no native term for the supervisor of the kitchen or of the earth oven.

The evening meal is usually eaten in the kitchen hut. An eating mat is laid on the ground, food placed on it, and the group sits around it. The highest ranking man sits at the head, the men and boys seated according to rank on his right side. The women sit on his left side, and the young girls serve.

Food from the earth oven is served on breadfruit or banana leaves or on plates of plaited coconut leaf. Large fish are placed on a wooden fish platter (*i sovasova ni ika*) and divided into portions according to rank. The head of the fish, the center of mana, goes to the highest ranking man. Soup is served in cups (*mbilo*) of half coconut shells. Eating is done with the fingers. After the meal a finger bowl of fresh water is passed first to the head of the group, then to the other members.

Fire Making

A native from the island of Kambara made fire in three minutes by the following method:

> He took a dry log of *yasiyasi*, one section (about 5 by 30 cm.) of which had been stripped of bark. He sat down and placed the log in front of him with the exposed surface on the upper side nearest him. He held a small, dry, pointed stick, 3.5 cm. in diameter and 35 cm. long, in his left hand as one holds a pencil, the right hand partly covering the left. He rubbed the pointed end along the exposed surface of the log until a groove formed in the log and wood dust collected at the end of the groove. When the wood dust began to smoke, he wound a piece of coconut reticulum into a coil and shook the smoking wood dust into the coil. He then took the coil in both hands and waved it to-and-fro until it caught fire.

For fire making *(nita)*, *waro* and *nawanawa (Cordia subcordata)* woods are preferred. Sticks are dried and stored on the beams in the lower end of the house. Fire is transported by lighting the split end of a coconut spathe and wrapping it in pandanus.

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Steaming

The small earth oven (*lovo*) used daily in Lau is prepared as follows: 252 354

A circular pit at least 1 meter wide and 0.5 meter deep is dug in the ground. The same pit is used repeatedly. Wood for fuel is collected in the bush by boys, usually younger brothers of the earth-oven group. Fuel is laid in the pit, and on top of the fuel are placed 30 or more stones. Round basaltic stones of uniform size, weighing about 2.5 to 3 pounds, are preferred. (Frequently basalt stones are imported from the volcanic islands. When basalt stones are not available stones of limestone are used. A set of earth-oven stones is used over a long period of time.) Unless imported matches are available the fuel is lighted by means of a burning brand from a neighboring fire. If there is no fire to be had it is made as described above. As the fire burns the stones fall to the bottom of the pit and are spread out with a stick.

Breadfruit is either steamed whole or steamed after being scraped with a shell, dried in the sun, and cut in halves. Breadfruit is placed in the oven first, directly on the hot stones. If no breadfruit is to be steamed, the hot stones are covered with a layer of green leaves such as *viavia (Crinum asiaticum)* before the food is put into the oven. Sweet potatoes are washed and manioc roots washed and scraped before being put into the oven. For a feast they are wrapped in small coconut-leaf baskets. Tahitian chestnuts are steamed in their shells. Pumpkin and papaya are cut in pieces, cleaned, and placed skin down on the top layer of food in the oven. If pumpkin or breadfruit alone is in the oven sticks are placed across the oven before it is covered. To close the oven two or three thick layers of non-poisonous leaves, such as *viavia, sitchi (Grewia crenata),* banana, or breadfruit are placed over the food; then a layer of dry coconut-leaf baskets or old gunny sacks; and finally a layer of earth tightly packed so that no steam can escape. After three or four hours the layers of earth and leaves are carefully removed. 252 [824] [824]

The poisonous varieties of manioc are made into a sort of pudding called *tapioke solo* by the following method. Peeled manioc roots are grated on the rough side of a piece of tin in which holes have been punctured. The tin grater is often fastened to a board and placed in a wooden bowl. A man sits on the ground, the bowl between his outstretched legs, or he sits astraddle a log to which the grater has been nailed. The gratings fall onto a coconut leaf. When tin is not available, a slab of fine coral is used as a grater, as was done in olden times. Fresh water is mixed with the grated manioc in the bowl and the mixture is strained by being squeezed through strips of the inner bark of the hibiscus fastened together at one end. The fibrous part of the manioc which is strained out is set in the sun to dry, usually on a piece of sheet iron, and the residue in the bowl is allowed to settle. Later the water is poured off and the starch, from which the poison has been extracted, remains at the bottom of the bowl. The starch is mixed with the dry manioc and the mixture is made by hand into balls about 6 cm. in diameter. Dry grated coconut is

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●252 occasionally mixed with the manioc just before it is made into balls. Each ball is wrapped separately in breadfruit, *valevale,* or ti leaves as follows:

If a breadfruit leaf is used, the ball is placed near the base of the leaf. The upper part of the leaf is then bent over the ball and the leaf drawn together to form a bag around the ball. The bag is tied with a strip of pandanus as follows: Loop the pandanus over the thumb of the hand which holds the bag of pudding upright, pass the pandanus back under the thumb below the ball of pudding, wind the pandanus around the ball twice, cut it with the teeth, pull the free end upward through the loop over the thumb, pull the other end down tight and close the loop. This ties the knot. Cut off the extra pandanus with the teeth. If *valevale* leaves are used to wrap the pudding, place two leaves at right angles, in the form of a cross, place ball on the intersection, draw the leaves up over the ball and tie with pandanus as described above. If ti leaves are used, place the ball on a ti leaf folded in half with tip meeting base, draw the leaf tightly around the ball to form a bag and with the teeth pull down a strand from the lower end of the midrib of the ti leaf, pass the strand around the ball twice and knot in the same way.

The bags of pudding are placed in the oven below the sweet potatoes.

Turtle, which is eaten only at a feast, is prepared on Kambara as follows:

The animal, lying on its back, is killed by a blow on the head with a stone. Then the fore and hind flippers are removed with a knife. The turtle is turned over and boiling water is poured onto the back shell. The end of a pointed, chisel-like stick is shoved under the plate closest to the neck. The plate is lifted, hot water poured into the opening, and the stick shoved deeper until the plate loosens. When all the back plates are thus removed, the turtle is placed on its back again and the belly shell is removed in one piece by first cutting around it and then cutting and lifting it off. If the turtle is being prepared for a chief, the cutting around the belly shell starts at the back, otherwise at the side. Next, by starting at the chest and working toward the rear, the meat is taken out. It is placed in a wooden food bowl, and cut into small pieces. Then comes the most important part of the preparations. The leader of the feast selects the portions to be given to each household, the quality of the meat and the size of the portion depending on rank. Cuts from the head of the turtle are for the chief. Each portion is placed in a scorched, double banana leaf, the midrib of which has been trimmed to make it pliable. The banana leaf is pleated into a bag, half a tumbler of water is added, the bag is covered with two *viavia* leaves, and the whole is tied with a strip of leaf. Each bag is marked with a sign known only to the maker—such as a special knot, an extra leaf, or a mark on the leaf—so that it may be identified later and presented to the proper household. The bags of turtle meat are placed on the *viavia* leaves covering the hot stones in the earth oven, the largest bag in the center. More leaves are placed over the bags, then over the whole is set the inverted lower shell of the turtle, then another layer of leaves, a layer of old coconut-leaf baskets, and finally earth. The oven is opened after three or four hours. The bones and viscera of the turtle are boiled into soup, if possible in a kerosene tin.

Pork is eaten only at a feast. It is prepared as follows:

The pig's throat is cut with a bamboo knife and the blood allowed to flow freely. The pig is then slung, back down, on a pole and singed over the fire. Next the entrails are removed through a slit in the belly, which is later filled with hot stones wrapped in leaves. The pig is then ready for the oven. If yams are used they are cut in pieces and placed next to the hot stones. The pig is placed, legs down, on top of the yams or other garden produce. The whole is covered with hibiscus leaves and finally with earth. Pigs to be eaten immediately are steamed for about four hours. Pigs to be distributed and taken home are steamed a shorter time. Before being eaten they are cut into pieces and boiled.

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Roasting

Roasting is a quick method of preparing food. Breadfruit is often placed whole, stem down, directly on the coals or placed on sticks across the oven pit above a fire in which stones are heated. After roasting, the skin of the breadfruit is quickly removed with a small, sharp stick. The breadfruit is ready to be eaten or be made into pudding. Wild yams and bush fruits are often roasted over an open fire in the bush. After roasting they are scraped, dipped in salt water, and eaten.

Boiling in Pots

Food was formerly boiled in earthenware pots (*kuro*), but now large imported iron pots are used. The fire is laid at one end of the kitchen and the pots are placed upon two iron rods above it. It is fanned with a pandanus-leaf fan (*iri*). The pots are covered with dry breadfruit leaves, which fall from the trees in the village and are gathered when needed.

Sweet potato and non-poisonous manioc are usually boiled in fresh water, but most of the boiling is done in coconut cream (*lolo*). Coconut cream is made as follows:

> Ripe nuts are husked by ripping the husk open at the stem end of the nut on the upturned pointed end of a husking stake (*ndoko*). The strip of husk, which has been freed, is pulled off by hand. The process is repeated until the husk has been removed. The nut is then halved by one blow from a cane knife and the flesh is grated on the tooth edged, upturned end of a piece of iron attached to a board. A person sits on the board astride the rod and grates into a wooden bowl. (Usually little girls do the grating for the kitchens.) Coconut milk is added to the gratings and the mixture is strained with a hibiscus strainer.

Salt is not manufactured in Lau. According to Tchosaia of Tokalau, formerly salt water was sometimes used for boiling. Today it is little used in pots although food is occasionally soaked or dipped in salt water before being eaten.

Mboro, the daily boiled dish, is made of greens and coconut cream with or without fish. Leaves of the cabbage, the sweet potato, *mboroa sovivi* (*Ipomea gracilis*), *mbele*, pumpkin, or manioc are picked from the stems. They are placed in the pot with coconut cream and some of the coconut gratings from which the liquid has been extracted for coconut cream. Fish or shellfish, if available, are added to the greens and coconut cream, and the pot is covered with a slightly dry breadfruit leaf and boiled slowly for about two hours.

Fish or shellfish are cleaned on the beach, but scales are not removed from the fish.

Soups are popular but are not made every day. A delicious fish soup called

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ika vakalolo is made by boiling fish in coconut cream to which a few small red peppers (*roketc*) have been added.

During the breadfruit season the main meal on Fulanga consists of breadfruit, peeled, cut into pieces, and stewed with shellfish in coconut cream.

In the papaya season a dish called *sepo* is prepared. Peeled, slightly green papayas are boiled in water until soft and grated manioc and grated coconut are added just before serving.

Stone Boiling

I saw the technique of boiling with hot stones used only once in Lau. The method was used at Naivindamu, Fulanga, in the preparation of *nggalu sua*, a pudding of *yambia*, for a wedding feast. *Yambia* is a slightly poisonous tuber, formerly a staple food in Lau. The poison is extracted as follows:

Yambia roots are washed and then grated on sticks wound with sennit. A hoop-shaped stick is sewn to the mouth of a gunny sack. The sack is filled with a mixture of grated *yambia* and water and hung from a wooden tripod over a wooden bowl. The strained liquid, caught in a bowl, is allowed to settle. When the starch has settled at the bottom of the bowl the liquid is poured off, more water is added, allowed to settle and again poured off. The starch is then dried in the sun. If not used immediately it is put into bags of coconut reticulum, again dried in the sun, and finally stored.

The *nggalu sua* was cooked as follows:

About 50 basalt earth-oven stones were heated in an open fire. A large wooden bowl or trough, 2 meters long and 30 cm. deep, was one third filled with *yambia* starch. The bowl was placed near the fire and made secure by placing a log crosswise under one end and driving two stakes into the ground, one on each side and touching the other end of the bowl. The stakes were tied tightly together over the top of the bowl with a tough vine. Fresh water was added to the starch and thoroughly mixed by hand. Then one stone from the fire was dropped into the mixture to test it. Coated with starch, it was shown to the leader of the feast, who decided whether or not more water should be added to the mixture. Then, one by one, all the hot stones were dropped into the bowl while the mixture was stirred vigorously by two boys, each with a straight branch of *mali*, about 2 meters long, from the lower end of which the bark had been removed. The hot stones were taken from the fire with a half coconut shell and a stick, or with a discarded *i yali* (the lower end of the midrib of a coconut leaf shaped into a sort of paddle), from which a wedge shaped piece had been removed to form tongs. The mixture boiled and thickened into a gelatinous, amber-colored mass. Two boys, dipping their hands frequently into salt water in a bowl to moisten and cool them, removed the stones, one by one, and closed air holes in the mass. The salt water slightly darkened the color of the starch. Finally small handfuls were wrapped together with *ti lolo* (pudding sauce sweetened with ti) in banana leaves, which had been made flexible by shaving the back of the midrib. They were then ready for distribution with the feast.

Sweet Puddings

Sweet puddings (*nggalu*), which accompany every feast, are made with or without a sauce. Sweet sauce is added to puddings made of manioc, breadfruit, taro, or *yambia*. Puddings with a sauce are often served and eaten as soon as they are made, before the earth ovens have been opened and the feast

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distributed. The sauce is sweetened with sugar cane, ti, or imported sugar. Stalks of sugar cane are ground on a sharp piece of coral called *i thoronga* and strained with a hibiscus strainer. The juice is placed in a large pot and stirred over the fire with a paddle-shaped stick called *i yali*, made for the occasion out of the lower end of a coconut-leaf midrib. The resulting caramel mixture is called *salasalaki*. Coconut cream (*lolo*) is added slowly to the *salasalaki* and the whole is boiled. The sauce is called *loloriri*.

To make manioc pudding (*mavu*) roots of the poisonous varieties are first made into *tapioke solo* (p. 153). Roots of nonpoisonous varieties are scraped and boiled. The cooked manioc is placed in a long oblong wooden bowl. Two boys, one sitting at each end of the bowl, hold it between their legs, while two young men, one standing on each side of the bowl, pound the mass with pounders (*i mbutu ni nggalu*) made from the lower end of the midrib of a coconut leaf. The pounding is done rapidly and in rhythm, first one lifting and lowering his pounder and then the other. Every three or four minutes fresh men replace the pair who are pounding. The two holding the bowl are replaced less frequently. The pounding continues for about 20 minutes. An older man then sprinkles some sauce over the mass and mixes it by hand. Then he takes some of the pudding in each hand and squeezes each handful quickly into three balls (*nggelena* or *nggele ni nggalu*), which fall into one corner of the bowl. When he has about 15 balls he sprinkles some sauce on a scorched, folded banana leaf (on which the midrib has been trimmed), places the balls on the leaf, and adds more sauce. Another man pleats the leaf into a bag and ties it. A bag of pudding is called *i thovo nggalu*. *Mavu* is also made of roasted breadfruit or of boiled or steamed taro.

Puddings without sauce are made of manioc, sweet potato, Tahitian chestnut, banana, taro, and *yambia*. Some pudding recipes follow:

Malimali. Peeled ripe bananas are pounded by hand in a wooden bowl. Dry *yambia* starch and the milk of green coconuts is added. The mass is mixed and divided into portions, each portion is wrapped in a scorched banana leaf, then in breadfruit or ti leaves and steamed.

Vakalolo vunitchi (banana pudding). Coconut cream is added to peeled, ripe, pounded bananas. The mixture is divided into portions, which are wrapped in banana leaves and steamed.

Vovo. Green bananas are boiled, peeled, and pounded. Grated coconut is added and the pudding is ready to eat.

Tololo. A mixture is prepared as for *tapioke solo*. Before steaming, coconut cream and grated coconut are added.

Tahitian chestnut pudding. Grated Tahitian chestnuts, grated coconut, and coconut cream are mixed and divided into portions which are wrapped in ti leaves and steamed.

Preserving

Fermented food (*mandrai*) is especially important on Fulanga, where any surplus of food is preserved for times of scarcity. Manioc imported from

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251 Mothe, Namuka, or Komo to Fulanga is made into *mandrai*. The two methods of fermenting are soaking in salt water and burying in the ground. The salt water method, used mainly by the men, serves to preserve food for a short time. Baskets of manioc are fastened to stakes in a sheltered spot in the lagoon. When needed the roots are scraped, pounded, mixed with grated coconut, made into balls, wrapped in breadfruit leaves, and either steamed or boiled (pl. 2, *B*). *Mandrai* is also made in pits of brackish water. One such pit, called Neikathi, is located at Nggaralevu, south of Undu on Kambara. The pit is about 10 meters deep and the water is reached by means of a wooden ladder. The pit was formerly also used for soaking *wangiri* nuts.

Food may be preserved for a year or more by the burial method described as follows:

> A hole (called *alua ni mandrai*), about 1 meter deep and 2 meters in diameter, is dug in the ground. It is lined with three thicknesses of freshly made *mbola*, coconut leaves split from the midrib and plaited. The freshly plaited coconut leaves are placed with split midribs toward the rim of the hole, the leaves radiating toward the center. The first row extends about 30 cm. outside the rim of the hole. Above the plaited coconut leaves is a layer of banana leaves, which have been dried in the sun and from which the inner side of the midrib has been stripped. The food to be preserved is placed on the banana leaves. Such a pit holds about 100 pounds of scraped manioc. Over the food is placed another layer of banana and another of plaited coconut leaves. The whole is weighed down with heavy stones.

Breadfruit and banana are also fermented in this fashion. If preserved food is kept for some time in a *mandrai* pit, the banana and coconut-leaf lining must be changed frequently. One pit is used repeatedly.

Preparation of Bush Food

252 *Wangiri*, the chief food of olden times, is said to have been prepared as follows:

> The *wangiri* nuts were first roasted on a bed of coals in order to crack the shells. Next they were soaked in brackish water for at least "four nights." Finally, they were either boiled in pots or steamed in an earth oven. For a hurried meal the nuts were roasted.

Roots of the *yaka (Pueraria thunbergiana)* were steamed in the earth oven or roasted.

The fruit of the *tarai* were strung together on a stick and steamed in the earth oven, then the skin was removed. The *tarai* was also boiled or eaten raw.

The *mbawaki*, *yaumitha*, and *nggalaka* fruit were also steamed. The *yaumitha* was first wrapped in breadfruit or *vanua* leaves. It was also roasted.

Tree grubs (*yavatou*) were wrapped in *vanua* or *vavale* leaves and steamed or boiled. They were frequently eaten raw.

The preparation of greens is described on page 155.

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415]

A

[576]

B

[287
516]

C

A, EARTH OVEN BEING PREPARED BY TWO YOUTHS FOR A WEDDING FEAST AT NAIVINDAMU VILLAGE, FULANGA. IN FOREGROUND ARE BASKETS OF BREADFRUIT, AT RIGHT A WOODEN BOWL (*PAPASIA*) FILLED WITH GRATED MANIOC. B, FULANGA YOUTHS PREPARING FERMENTED MANIOC FOR EARTH OVEN. C, WOMEN OF TOKALAU VILLAGE, KAMBARA, OUTLINING DESIGN ON LARGE PIECE OF TAPA (TONGAN *NGATŪ*).

[End Plate 2]

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134 by extensive collecting from jungles and reefs, and by regular
222 fishing in the lagoons. Of the group, Fulanga has the least soil. The natives say this is because the first inhabitant of
[173] Fulanga was a hen. She had some chicks and when the chicks were hungry she said: "Why don't you scratch?" So they scratched and scratched and finally they scratched the bottom
[103] out of the land. The chicks are the people of Fulanga and the jagged pock-marked island is called Vanua Seu or scratched land.

773 Kambara differs from the other famine isles in that its
134 volcanic outcrop provides a limited amount of good garden land. When the great forefather god of the Kambara people arrived he looked over the whole island and saw nothing but rocks. So he thought to himself he would go to another island and steal a piece of land, for the gods love nothing better than to trick one another. He went to the islands of the Lau group, but each island was guarded by its own forefather god. Finally he arrived at Vatoa. The forefather of
[823] this island was asleep. So the forefather of Kambara dug up a piece of land. A spring gushed forth from the hole. He put the land into a basket and took it to Kambara. When he arrived he found that the people of Kambara had baked a piece of land he had previously stolen and made it useless for gardening. He was very angry and placed the land from Vatoa on the side of Kambara (instead of in the middle as on the volcanic islands). On all Kambara this is the only
[823] garden land, and when the water of the spring in Vatoa is dirty the people know yams are being planted on Kambara.

264 Provision for the evening meal is a daily problem requiring foresight and labor. The Lauans eat one main meal a day just after sundown when the day's work is done. The
● 252 main food consists of a carbohydrate (called "true food")
[262] such as manioc, sweet potato, or breadfruit gathered, prepared, and steamed in the earth oven by the men. The earth oven is a pit in the ground in which the food is placed over hot

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stones. It is covered with green leaves and earth and steamed for an hour or more. With the "true food" is served a dish consisting of fish, if possible, and edible green leaves boiled in coconut cream. The ingredients for the boiled dish are gathered and prepared in large imported iron pots by the women. Formerly earthenware pots made in Lau were used, but pots are no longer made.[2] Without fish the meal is considered very poor indeed.

Most families have sufficient initiative to cope with the food problem in years of normal rainfall, so that the islands are practically self-sufficient. But when a violent hurricane sweeps over the islands, destroying harvests and habitations—or a long, searing drought withers the crops—even the coarsest edible jungle roots will not cover the needs of the famine island inhabitants, who would starve without the rice and flour which are rushed to their aid by the colonial government in Suva. Such a hurricane occurred in 1936.

Fortunately catastrophes of this kind do not occur often, but drought is a constant menace. Rain is quickly absorbed through the sharp, porous limestone. There are no streams and only a very few water holes, which are usually brackish. Practically all the fresh water used by the natives must be collected in tanks and wooden bowls from roofs of imported sheet iron or of thatch. The natives, however, require amazingly little fresh water. They drink the sweet milk of the young coconut, steam their food in the earth oven or boil it in coconut cream, and bathe in the sea. Only since they have donned *lavalavas* of cloth have they needed fresh water for laundering. The government has aided the natives in building small cement reservoirs roofed with sheet iron for each village, but the natives are so little concerned with the lack of fresh water that they do not repair the reservoirs, and few of them are in use.

[2] L. Thompson, "The Pottery of the Lau Islands, Fiji," *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 1938.

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THE WEDDING FEAST

Young men are building a fire to heat the stones in an earth oven pit. Wrapped food will be placed on the hot stones, covered with earth and steamed.

[Facing p. 54]

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554 585 614 wooden bowl, and a few girls sat on the fringe of the circle but did not drink.

The men were joking and telling stories. One told a yarn [164] about two men present who had both legs grotesquely swollen by elephantiasis. As healthy young men these two had left Fulanga to seek wives on Namuka, an island famed for its beautiful girls. They were absent nine years, but when finally they returned, instead of lovely young brides they brought home swollen legs from Namuka! This story was greeted with roars of laughter in which the two men joined. One of them, however, immediately retaliated with a long tale of the exploits of his ancestors, to which the others listened politely.

[252] Most of the women and girls were busy in the kitchen houses, steaming edible greens which they boiled with fish in coconut cream for the feast. They made wreaths of leaves, flowers, and strips of hibiscus bark to wear around their necks, and stuck sprays of sweet smelling flowers over their ears. The young men were busy making a pudding of the 252 starch of a tuber (*Yacca pinnatifida*). They stirred red-hot 585 stones in a wooden bowl filled with the starch mixed with water. Toward noon, two large earth ovens, full of ripe breadfruit, sliced pumpkin and tapioca pudding were covered with green leaves and earth. Two hours later the ovens were opened and the food was removed and placed in baskets until its distribution after the ceremonial exchange of property.

585 The bride and groom took no part in these festivities. The 614 bride, looking none too happy, sat with a group of women in the house of the groom's father which was her headquarters. If her father had been living in the village his house would have been used. The groom, looking dull and bored, stayed in or near his headquarters on the other side of the village. In the middle of the afternoon when the ceremonial exchange of property (called *solevu*) between the two inter-marrying

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[Facing p. 100]

FOOD PRESERVED BY FERMENTATION

Tapioca, which has been allowed to ferment, is being prepared for the earth oven in the Fulanga lagoon.